THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES UNDEPENDENT CHARGE) (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The objectives of releasing quotas for export of raw cotton are stabilisation of prices in the domestic market, provision of remunerative prices to the cotton growers and to maintain India's presence in the international market as a stable supplier.

Demand and Production of Firewood

176. SHRl SURESH PACHOURI: : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORISIS be pleased to state :

(a) Whethre the Forests Report, 1987 compiled by Forest Survey of India states that there is gap of 235 million cubic metres between demand and sustainable production of firewood in the .ountry; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to bridge this gap?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (SHRTKAMALNIATH): (a) Yes, Sir. The gap is only 195 M. cum. and not 235 M. cum.

(b) Steps taken by Governmen! to bridge this gap are :

(i) Alternative sources of energy are being developed to replace fuelwood in domestic and commercial sectors.

(ii) Improved Chullahs are being popularised in rural areas to save fuel-wood.

(iii) Alternate fuels like Kerosene, LPG etc. are being subsidised in tribal areas.

(iv) Solar cookers are being advocated to harness solar energy.

(v) Massive afforestation programmes have been launched to raise fuelwood and fodder plantatons under social forestry programme.

Promotion of Afforestation in the Country

177. SHRI SURUSH PACHOURI Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the current rate of deforestation in the country;

(b) what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what are the schemes under implementation at present by Government to check deforestation and promote afforestation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) According to the State of rorest Report 1989 he annual rate of loss of forest cover is 47,500 hectares.

(b) The causes of decline of forest cover are :

(1) Higher demand for fuelwood and timber due to increased population.

(2) Overgrazing leading to degradation of forest land.

(3) Requirements of wood based industries.

(4) Insufficient financial outlays for regeneration of degraded forest land.

(5) The problem of shifting cultiva tion in tribal areas especially in the North Eastern Region.

(c) Following schemes are being imple mented to promote afforestation and to check deforestation:

(1) The Integrated Wasleltnds Development Scheme.

(2) Scheme for fuelwood and fodder project.

(3) Peoples nurseries scheme.

(4) Scheme for conservation of minor forest produce.

(5) Scheme for Aerial seeding.